

Irish Garden Plant Society

Newsletter - September 2022



Issue 156

Irish Garden Plant Society

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*Copy for the January issue as soon as possible please
and no later than **16th November**.*

Cover:

Mullaghdillon Garden, Slane. Photo courtesy of Richard Murphy.

Grateful thanks to our horticultural advisers: Stephen Butler and Brendan Sayers.

Welcome



Post-pandemic, the big ticket garden occasions such as Bloom, Chelsea and the Carlow Garden Festival have thankfully returned, each showcasing designer gardens and providing a platform for new trends and ideas.

We all enjoy taking inspiration from such events, but I was struck by and want to share the sentiments of a friend who remarked that, as he grew older, the joy of one's own garden — far from perfect though that might be — came increasingly from the association of plants and people: the cutting from a relative, the reminder of a garden visit, the shrub from one's old home.

Surely this resonates with all of us regardless of age? It links closely with the Society's aim to find out about, source and conserve the garden plants of the island of Ireland. On page 12, Charles Nelson writes about the awakening some 40+ years ago of the need to conserve, not just giant pandas and the like, but the many garden plants which were starting to be lost to cultivation.

Stephen Butler on page 5 reflects on intervening decades and how, if anything, the task has become even more important as new pressures such as climate change are threatening plants, making the need to conserve genetic diversity more acute. He has a stark message for us: if a plant goes, we can never get it back.

What more can be done? How about seeking out and buying some of the Irish plants which have recently featured in the Newsletter, taking cuttings of some that you may have already, growing them on, and sharing them with friends? A truism perhaps, but the best way to preserve a plant is to pass it on.

Maeve

Maeve Bell Editor



A Note from the Chair



This note could be re-titled From a Garden Chair. Sitting on a bench passed on to me by an IGPS member, I am viewing plants given to me by other members of the Society.

Furcraea parmentieri is a large-growing succulent similar to yucca. Now about five years old, it will be some years before it produces a tall spike of flowers and bulbils. *Fuchsia procumbens*, a spreading ground cover, has pale orange tubular flowers; it is most unfuchsia-like until the large red fruits form. It roots easily and pieces can be lifted and potted up. This leads me to encourage members to propagate plants for our forthcoming plant sales. Our Seed List is also a valued activity so please collect seed this autumn and send it to Debbie Bailey, see page 24 for details.

In August I visited Lismacloskey Rectory Garden at the Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra, where Maureen Watson and her team of volunteers were busy maintaining the garden including its many Irish cultivars. Herbaceous plants, shrubs, and apple trees were in flower or fruit. Robert Logan, Chair of the Northern Committee, spoke of acquisitions of daffodils and primroses raised by Honorary Members Brian Duncan and Joe Kennedy respectively: a reason for members to visit the garden next spring.

Many of you will know Stephen Butler from his work on behalf of the Society as Heritage Plants Coordinator. Now retired from Dublin Zoo, he has written about the trials, tricks and triumphs of a zoo horticulturist in a book entitled *Gardening for Gorillas*. Many congratulations Stephen on behalf of the IGPS.

In July I wrote to members in Munster and Connacht asking for volunteers to form a regional committee, the previous committee members having retired following many years of dedicated service to the IGPS. The response so far has been limited but, now that autumn has arrived, can members in these provinces give the request a second thought? Similarly, there are vacancies on the National Executive Committee for Vice-Chair, Munster representative and an ordinary member.

If you are a recent, returning or long-time member I hope you will enjoy the Society in the coming months – attending lectures, browsing for ‘just that plant’ at a plant sale, reading the Newsletter and e-bulletin, or scrolling the website.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary".

Mary Forrest Chairman



If it goes, it's gone

by Stephen Butler

Garden plants are valuable for many reasons, and we're not just talking pollinator friendly or long season of interest.

Border at Glasnevin. Photo courtesy of Marie Hourigan.

They are also a living connection with history and contribute to genetic diversity. But by their nature they can be ephemeral. Climate change, new pests and diseases, and changes in the nursery trade put pressure on our plants, especially the older varieties. This was increasingly recognised in the late 1970s and early 1980s leading to the foundation of Plant Heritage (formerly the National Council for Conservation of Plants and Gardens) in the UK, and the Irish Garden Plant Society (IGPS) in 1981. One of the Society's main aims is *'to research and locate garden plants considered to be rare or in need of conservation, especially those raised in Ireland by Irish gardeners and nurserymen.'*

Since then our newsletters, plant sales, lectures, and garden visits have regularly included Irish plants, now often referred to as Irish Heritage Plants (IHPs), plants bred or found in an Irish garden or nursery, or introduced by someone from the island of Ireland working abroad. All four of the Society's medal-winning

Chelsea Show exhibits highlighted Irish cultivars, and reinforced links to the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, where many IHPs have been held safely. The Society's publication in 2000 of *A Heritage of Beauty – The Garden Plants of Ireland, An Illustrated Encyclopaedia* by Dr Charles Nelson, was a key event. With 5,000 plants listed (many of course long gone even then), this is still the go-to reference.

Record keeping of who was growing Irish plants started in 2007 and has developed into a spreadsheet, a never-ending marathon. It now contains over 2100 entries comprising more than 1000 plants. As part of our membership of Plant Heritage, the UK-based plant conservation organisation, the information is now held on its Persephone database; this has proved its worth many times, enabling checks to be made for the least grown and therefore the most at risk. With our recent National Collection status (see Issue 153,



Primula 'Julius Caesar'. Photo courtesy of Paddy Tobin.

September 2021), it is now easier to cross-reference with the RHS Plant Finder and to identify which IHPs are disappearing from nursery lists. It also links Irish plants to major collections in the UK, where many Irish cultivars are still grown.

Regular engagement with IGPS members is essential. Between us, we have over 200 plants in our gardens that are no longer available commercially; some of these may even be the last known specimen. Without the records, the Society would not know where they are or even that they are being grown at all.



Narcissus 'Countess of Annesley'

Since our record keeping started, many stories of plants being rediscovered have surfaced. But we have to be very circumspect when a cultivar is 'found'. A few years ago a keen-eyed member, whilst on holiday in Prague, spotted *Phlox* 'Daisy Hill', from Daisy Hill Nursery around 1900, on an alpine plant stand and snapped it up for 20 cents. Brought back to Ireland, propagated and distributed, all was excellent until it flowered, a delicate pink when it should have been deep rose, so not the true plant at all. *Phlox* 'Daisy Hill' is still listed in two nurseries that we know of, one each in France and Germany...but the question will still remain: is it true?

Cultivars of primroses abound of course. One, *Primula* 'Julius Caesar', was assumed lost, until an IGPS member 'rediscovered' it. How do we know it is the right plant though? Well, this was an easy one as family members of the raiser — Miss Winifred Wynne, from Avoca, Co Wicklow — remembered her caring for it in their garden when she was age 90 and nearly blind. With such a distinctive deep colour, it is easily identifiable, but often not a good doer. Maybe that's why it is not commercially available?

Sometimes 'lost' IHPs may be found growing in plain sight! *Narcissus* 'Countess of Annesley', a chance daffodil seedling found naturalised and abundant around 1904, was rediscovered recently, still growing where it originated at Castlewellan, Co Down. The tepals are narrow and have a distinctive twist. Once pictures were circulated around other potential sites, reports came back that it was still in several other large gardens, happily growing away unnoticed until sought.

Of the many Irish-bred *Escallonia* still in trade, one has a particular poignancy. While Charles Frederick Ball was employed at the Botanic Gardens Glasnevin, he raised several *Escallonia* seedlings. One he selected and called *E.* 'Alice' for his bride-to-be, leaving the others unnamed. He was killed at Gallipoli while serving during WW1. His colleagues back at Glasnevin chose another seedling and named it for him after his death, hence *Escallonia rubra* 'C. F. Ball', still a popular cultivar. In 2016 the Society donated a specimen of *E.* 'C. F. Ball' to The Irish National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, Dublin, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Two years later the Society donated a specimen of 'Alice',



to be planted there. *Escallonia* 'Alice' is not in trade but, after propagation and distribution, it is now safe in several gardens.

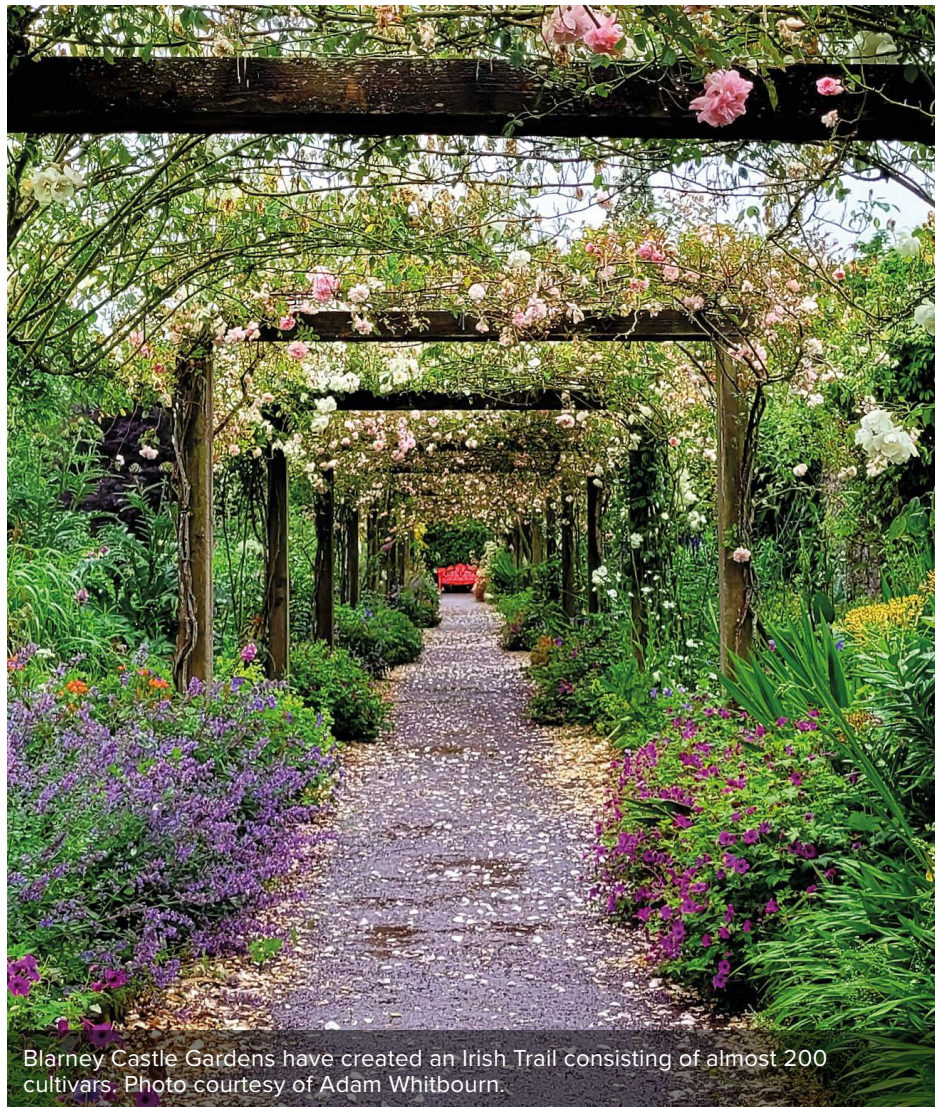
Verification, as mentioned above, is always a problem, especially as many of the IHPs are based on old nursery catalogue descriptions, which are often very brief. A comparison trial at NBG Glasnevin of accessions of *Aconitum* 'Newry Blue', another Daisy Hill Nursery introduction, revealed some very obvious impostors. *Aconitum* of course produces copious seed; to keep the variety true, 'Newry Blue' needs deadheading immediately after flowering, and to be propagated only by division. Self-sown seedlings look very similar to the genuine plant. This cultivar is not only common in trade, it is also available as seed! Where does that leave us trying to maintain the cultivar?

There are many advantages to a dispersed collection of plants, especially one that has such a range of genera. An obvious one is spreading the effort. Members' gardens range from small private havens, to nurseries, to world-renowned visitor attractions. They have a range of soils and local climatic conditions. Each will have its own "good doers" and can act as a refuge in future when there may be more challenging growing conditions.



Irish plants are the unique feature of the Society. Growing the plants is an important part but propagation, sharing material, collecting herbarium specimens to help correct future naming issues, and keeping track of the many cultivars in the collection will provide years of work yet.

Of great importance are the members who actively not only grow, but source, propagate, and distribute IHPs. Concentrating on a particular genus that grows well in their gardens is extremely useful, allowing comparisons as part of verifying cultivars.



Blarney Castle Gardens have created an Irish Trail consisting of almost 200 cultivars. Photo courtesy of Adam Whitbourn.

Our Wish List

Listed on the IHP spreadsheet there are many cultivars which may be lost ...but hope should never fade completely! However, there are far too many with just one member listed as growing them, including:

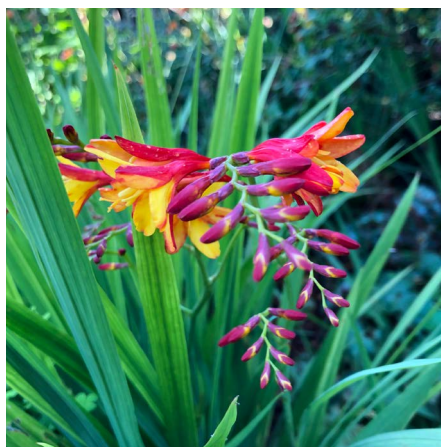
Campanula cochlearifolia 'Lissadell Variety', a low growing, pale blue free- flowering cultivar,

Dierama 'Miranda', a dwarf Angel's Fishing Rod with pink flowers from the Slieve Donard Nursery,

Dierama 'Puck', also introduced by the Slieve Donard Nursery but it has smaller pale pink flowers,

Dryas octopetala 'Burren Nymph', with as many as 20 petals forming its double flowers,

Phlox 'Eventide', from Daisy Hill Nursery, with bluish-white flowers, and

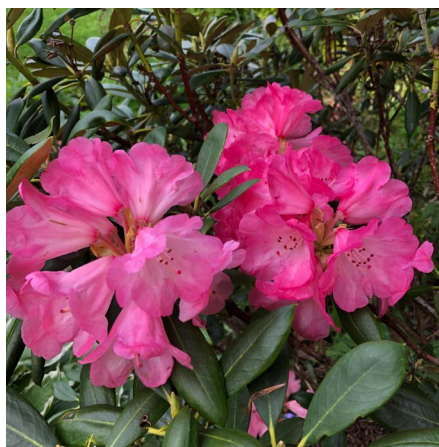


Rubus 'Margaret Gordon', named by the late Bob Gordon of Portglenone for his wife. It was introduced by Baronscourt Nurseries, Co Tyrone, and is a white flowered seedling of *R. 'Benenden'* with frilly edges to the petals.

The Slieve Donard Nursery was justly famous in its day for plant breeding and will always be associated with *Dierama* and *Escallonia*. Some of the *Escallonia* which may yet be in cultivation include 'Donard Gem', 'Donard Rose', 'Donard Surprise' and 'Erecta'.

If you grow any of the above plants, **please, please** let me know. ■

Two more "threatened" plants are Rhododendron 'Joan Slinger' and Crocosmia 'Flaire' pictured below.



Can you help? If you know you are growing an IHP, or are interested in a particular genus, please contact us at igps.heritageplants@gmail.com. The records are confidential, grower's details are not passed to anyone else. Remember, the best way to preserve a plant is to pass it on.

Lasting displays for Winter Pots

by Cherry Townsend

As winter approaches, we often throw away our summer bedding plants and stack the pots away for the winter months. An effective but simple idea is to create natural arrangements outdoors by cutting foliage from your garden and arranging it in your containers, troughs and window boxes. The idea originated in Canada where it is too cold to use winter bedding, indeed they are often called “Canadian Planters”.

The bigger the container, the more plant material is needed for the arrangement. When cutting your foliage, think about maintaining the natural shape of your shrubs as you prune out selected stems. There is plenty of inspiration on the internet to give you ideas for your design. By keeping the spent compost in the pots from summer, you have an ideal base to secure your foliage. Make sure that the compost is quite compacted to provide a decent anchor for your arrangement and keep it damp to preserve the foliage during dry weather.

Coniferous evergreens last the longest. I start with basic greens such as leylandii or thuja to create a framework. I then add various colours and textures, for example, *Cryptomeria japonica* works beautifully as do evergreen magnolias, laurels and larger leaved eucalyptus. Hollies, box and viburnum also look well.



Arrange the branches at various angles with the more upright in the centre, then work outwards bringing the branches down until they are almost horizontal at the edge of the container or, depending on the foliage, hanging down. The key here is to really fill your container for a luxurious look as you don't want to see any bare soil.

Add interest by filling any gaps with coloured dogwoods and pussy willow for a natural look and perhaps some stems of berried cotoneaster or holly for a pop of red. Add wired pine cones and birch branches sprayed gold, silver or white for a more festive look, and perhaps a ribbon bow wired into the centre.

Experiment and have fun!

Members' Memories

Charles Nelson recalls how it started.

It all started with discussions sparked by an initiative in Britain to try to stem the decline in the range of plants offered by nurseries. Work on garden restoration sensibly required the use of plants that were “correct” for the place and the time. You should not restore a seventeenth century garden, for example, using Irish yews because the Irish yew did not enter gardens until the nineteenth century. Similarly, McGredy’s roses don’t belong in a restored Victorian parterre. And, more mundanely, why could people no longer get dozens of once familiar plants in the local nursery?

A scheme was launched in Britain to try to reverse the decline in garden plant diversity resulting from factors such as the loss of small specialist nurseries and the rise of

multinationals. The scheme involved setting up local “chapters” to help find and then propagate “lost” plants, and the issuing of what became known as “pink lists” of these vulnerable garden plants.

In Ireland, there was rising interest in historic gardens stimulated by the ground-breaking book *Lost Demenses* and by the initiative by An Taisce to list gardens of outstanding historical interest. The RHSI, meanwhile, was preparing to mark what it thought was its 150th anniversary by publishing a major book about Irish horticulture and gardening. Jim Kelly, who worked in the Kinsealy Research Centre, was asked to write about Ireland’s contribution to ornamental horticulture. He became a frequent visitor to the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, to consult nurserymen’s catalogues and other



Rosa 'Dublin Bay' bred by Sam McGredy IV. Photo courtesy of Rosie Maye.



The National Botanic Gardens. Photo courtesy of Marie Hourigan.

sources. We would often meet as many of the works he needed happened to be kept in my office. Others were on similar quests. I was roped in to help co-ordinate and edit the book. With all the coming and goings and requests to check references, I soon became aware of the considerable, yet unrecorded, wealth of plants that Ireland had produced — not just a yew and some roses and daffodils.

When it was suggested that it would be a good idea to start looking for “pink list” plants in Ireland’s gardens, I pointed out that there were Irish plants in need of rescue which were not on the British list. Would it not be sensible to join the movement

but with our own particular quests as the principal aim, i.e. to record, propagate and distribute plants that Irish gardens and nurseries had raised and introduced? After all, they were more likely to be found here, close to their origins.

Eventually a meeting was arranged at the National Botanic Gardens. Rather than simply establish a local group of the National Council for the Conservation of Plant and Gardens (now Plant Heritage), we agreed to set up the Irish Garden Plant Society and to affiliate to the NCCPG.

In the early days we were few in number and everything was done by hand: there were no computers,

no internet. I drew up a list of plant names based on the work done for the RHSI book. It was typed on a typewriter and somehow duplicated. I have kept a copy: "A preliminary and interim list of cultivars of Irish origin", 24 pages, dated July 1981. With around 32 names per page, this recorded about 750 uniquely Irish plants even though the majority of the modern daffodils and roses were excluded. Most of the plants were already extinct, while the survivors were to be found in only very few gardens, north, south, east and west, kept alive by keen, knowledgeable gardeners.

It is impossible to bring back an extinct plant so conserving what we still have is important. The IGPS doesn't have a motto, but we have often repeated that the best way to keep a plant is to give it away. If you desire a piece, just whisper, as Lady Moore often did: "Do you think that plant might have a little brother/sister?"

I am sure the IGPS has "rescued" many a cultivar that was neglected and endangered; that is the incredible achievement that the founding members hoped for. Thank you all, and long may the endeavours continue. ■

Mary Davies offers congratulations.

All congratulations to the IGPS on its fortieth birthday.

It was satisfying that it was celebrated at the AGM, and that Charles Nelson, its principal instigator and first chairman, was able to take part. The founder members were a comparatively youthful bunch back in the 1980s and many have played significant parts since. Mary Forrest, speaking as chairman at the AGM, modestly did not point out that she was the IGPS's first Honorary Secretary.

I've watched with pleasure as the IGPS has expanded its role and flourished over four decades, and my life has been enriched by gardening friendships going back to those early days. May the IGPS's next forty years be as enjoyable for its current members.



A Landscape for Lions

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We read that garden design and plant choice are often influenced by the garden itself, the views out, the lovely old walls, a stream, the mature trees — the spirit of the place, the *genius loci*. Transferring that spirit to various zoo projects requires building habitats that need to be 'immersive' allowing visitors to feel the spirit of the habitat drawing on the animal's natural home.

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From a purely plant point of view, how do you create the *genius loci* of various habitats? Asian elephants equals bamboo, bamboo, bamboo. African savanna means scattered trees with herbaceous vegetation, grasses and bulbs. A NW America coastline for sea lions? That's harder! A 100m-wide beach backed by dunes and eventually a coniferous forest? Hmmm, but we've only got a 15m wide planting area...hmmm indeed.

Personally, I feel the habitat we built at Dublin Zoo which had the most distinctive appearance was for the Asiatic lions. This was the second landscape project here and drew on previous experience. Asiatic lions are now very rare, only found in the Gir Forest in northwest India. The habitat is basically a dry, deciduous forest, like a savanna. But we already had an African savanna, how could we make this one distinct? The other big difference was the planting on the visitor side was restricted to a narrow strip, a mere two metres wide.

Plant choice came to the fore. Scrubby trees were needed to screen the boundary fences. How about *Crataegus*? Multi-stemmed, three metre high root-balled specimens of *C. x lavalleei* 'Carrierei' and *C. persimilis* 'Prunifolia' were found. Why multi-stemmed? Well, cats may not eat the trees, but have you ever had a cat in your garden scratching the bark of a beautiful tree to sharpen its claws? Now imagine that with a heavy lion! A fully mature *Castanea sativa* had been severely stunted elsewhere in the zoo by this action; deep claw marks had completely shredded the bark for half the circumference. A

multi-stem tree would have three or four thin stems, maybe only 25mm thick, far too small to encourage scratching. It should be many years before the stems would be thick enough, but could we protect them in the meantime? How about whips of *Crataegus*, very cheap, plant them as a sacrificial protective circle and see if any survive? The idea is an old one, where foresters would leave clumps of brambles and hawthorn around valuable young oak trees to reduce browsing by deer. Including a dead tree as a scratching post helped too!

The two main *Crataegus* varieties give a great display in flower in spring, and in autumn in fruit, but they are secondary, background planting to the main evergreen display. Earlier planting here had tested *Hippophae rhamnoides*, a thorny, quick growing, silvery-leaved small tree, which can be a real thug as it can be invasive — look at the sand dunes at Bull Island in Dublin Bay. The *Hippophae* had not only survived with the lions, it had grown well with little damage. Many more were used the second time, especially near the front so that visitors can look through them, framing the views of the lions. They give a very different appearance to this habitat, and they are not used in bulk anywhere else in the zoo. A dense gravel mulch reduced weeds and enhanced the 'savanna' feel.

Visitor-side planting, the stand-off area, had a couple of *Hippophae* which helped disguise the fencing. Tall, vertical *Salix exigua*, another distinctive silvery-leaved beauty, looked great too, but it is a dry land willow, only to about 4m, and suckers like mad, even under tarmac. Be warned! ■

For more stories about Stephen's experiences over 37 years at Dublin Zoo, look at www.gardeningforgorillas.com where you will find details of his recently published book.

Grow an Irish Plant

by Peter & Nicola Milligan,
Maurice Parkinson and
Brendan Sayers

***Olearia* 'Talbot de Malahide'**



Olearias are popular plants with Irish gardeners, especially for those of us who live by the sea. Native to Australia and New Zealand, many of the species have a thick, resistant foliage which tolerates salt-laden winds and can be grown as part of a shelterbelt or as a specimen within coastal gardens. However they should not be confined to seaside locations as they are not only useful but also have attractive foliage and make good garden plants wherever you garden.

One Irish garden, Malahide Castle at Malahide, County Dublin, was a centre for the cultivation and documentation of *Olearia* and how they performed under Irish conditions, and the owner, Lord Talbot de Malahide, was honoured in the naming of *Olearia* 'Talbot de Malahide', one of our Irish heritage plants.

It is a large shrub or small tree with dull green, leathery foliage which is smothered with bloom in late summer. Unlike many olearias with daisy-like flowers, the flowers here are smaller, the showiest parts being

the ray florets, those outer flowers with larger petals. The flowers have more ray florets than its supposed parent, *Olearia avicennifolia* and it is proposed as a possible hybrid. It is unknown in the wild. **BS**

***Agapanthus* 'Helen'**



Beginning in the 1990's Gary Dunlop, the founder and owner of Ballyrogan Nursery in County Down, bred, selected, and introduced *Agapanthus*, *Crocasmia*, *Dierama*, and *Erythronium* to mention but a few of the plant genera in which he had an interest.

Charles Nelson (E C Nelson, *A Heritage of Beauty*, IGPS, 2000) lists some fifteen agapanthus that can be attributed to Mr Dunlop. At this time, we have been able to add some other introductions to the above list to arrive at a total of some forty cultivars; we cannot guarantee that this is a complete record, there may be more.

The agapanthus featured here, A 'Helen', is a real beauty. As the photograph shows the white flushed, light violet flowers are a perfect foil for the vivid yellow stamens and, as can also be seen, this cultivar is beloved by pollinators.

Sadly, Gary Dunlop closed his nursery in 2019 but many of his introductions can still be found in the nursery trade and are well worth seeking out. Find them, propagate them, give some to a fellow member and send some to an IGPS plant sale to ensure that these Irish introductions are preserved in our gardens. **N&PM**

The Lough Tree of Wexford

When Joy and I planned Ballyrobert Gardens just over 30 years ago, a key part of our intention at the time was to ensure that the design of the garden would reflect the historic nature of the site which seemed to have been a clachan.

There were fruit trees here when we purchased the site, the bulk of which were plums growing in hedges. A small orchard was included in our plan and, following visits to the Irish apple collections at the Organic Centre, Rossinver and the ISSA centre in County Clare, we chose a range of heritage apple varieties to meet our needs. Our garden is hopeless for top fruit, given its heavy soil and being a perfect frost pocket, but we had confidence that these old Irish varieties which had evolved in similar

conditions would be very fitting for the type of garden which we were planning.

The tree that impressed us most on our travels was an apple variety with its origins in County Wexford, hence its name, The Lough Tree of Wexford. To say this is a wonderful tree and much more than just an apple tree is an understatement; it has far exceeded our expectations. The blossom in spring is mighty plentiful on a tree to about 12m, and its ability to produce a regular crop of attractive fruit on our site is very impressive. This variety is essentially a desert apple but it is also very suitable for cooking.

We now have three trees of this variety including one in a hedge; bearing in mind its upright habit and moderate vigour, we are confident that it would be the perfect tree for adding to hedges and also be very suitable for smaller gardens. And that is not all about this tree. There is no need for pesticides because, to date, there has been no mildew nor apple canker on our trees. Most years the leaves turn an attractive yellow colour in the autumn, the perfect contrast to the beautiful crimson fruit. **MP**



Three Trees

by Rae McIntyre

Sometime in the 1980s I acquired three trees for the garden. They were not much more than cuttings but the three grew quite rapidly in our copious rainfall.

One came from County Cork when Davy and I spent an enjoyable touring holiday there. We drove into a small town one day and I saw a market in full swing. I love markets and this one had a stall selling plants. The only one I saw that I wanted was a 30cm cutting with a reddish stem and leathery leaves. There was no label on it and the stall holder had no idea what it was. It was a well-rooted cutting so I planted it in a place sheltered by an old barn wall and the greenhouse. I looked forward to it flowering and hoped it would turn out to be a rhododendron.



Buds of *Drimys winteri*

Time passed. It grew taller over the years but there was no sign of bloom. I became used to that and occasionally I would use the attractive foliage in a flower arrangement. Visitors to the garden would sometimes ask about its name but I confessed to having

no idea. One man said he was nearly positive it was a *Franklinia alatomahia* but, as the *Hillier Manual of Trees and Shrubs* said that needed a hot, continental summer to flower, I decided that it was never going to do much in our cold, wet, windy maritime climate.

Then last autumn I realised that it had become a small tree about five metres tall. I had lapsed into the habit of ignoring it and felt ashamed because it was dotted with red fleshy buds and the stems were of a more pronounced crimson than they had been. The bark and twigs were aromatic when crushed. I decided it was high time I found out what it really was. I have been a member of the Royal Horticultural Society for many years so sent a small branch to them in February and asked them to identify it. A very pleasant letter came from a botanist in Wisley telling me the following:

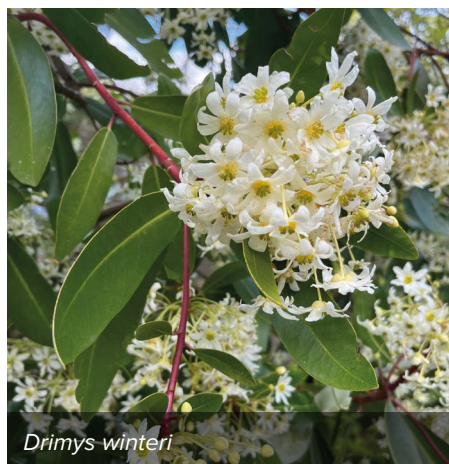
“The plant appears to be *Drimys winteri*, a small evergreen tree native to the temperate coastal rain forests of Chile and Argentina. In the UK it grows best in areas less prone to hard frost.”

The thermometer here can occasionally plummet to -18°C but the *Drimys winteri* was always unscathed.

In early April its red buds split open to reveal abundant, creamy-white scented flowers. Each terminal cluster had up to fifty tiny florets and these continued to open until the middle of June. I don't think it can be particularly rare but I have never

seen another tree like it.

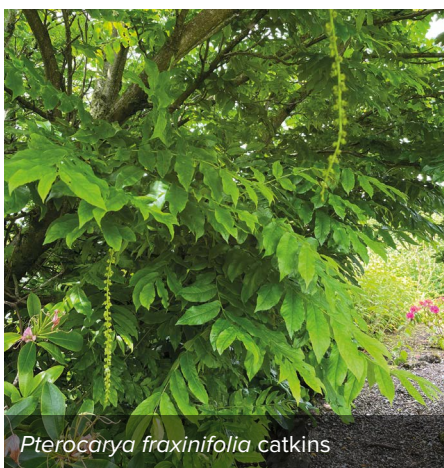
The *Drimys winteri* did offer some compensation and consolation for a weeping ash tree inflicted with *Chalara fraxinea*, the ash dieback disease. This has been high on the list of my favourite trees and was given to me by my father. It will probably have to be felled this autumn. During the summer it wasn't completely bare but the few tussocks of leaves and the lifeless branches that stuck out like pokers and snapped easily were pitiful. It used to be a noble tree.



Not far from the dying ash there is a *Pterocarya fraxinifolia*, a Caucasian wingnut. It's not related to the ash even though the *fraxinifolia* part of its name means ash-like foliage. The leaves are somewhat bigger and shinier than those of the ordinary ash and can be affected by frost; ash tree leaves never are. I bought this, as a tiny tree, at a plant fair in the 1980's; because I had read that it likes moist soil, I planted it in the wettest part of the garden and it seemed happy enough there. Suckers have appeared regularly and

are sent to plant sales. The tree can bear pendent catkins that, in females, may be up to 50cm long. I had seen a *Pterocarya fraxinifolia* at Exbury Gardens in Hampshire one May and its very impressive catkins were, at a rough estimate, about 75cm long. There were still none in this garden — until this year! While looking closely at the seven flowers on a neighbouring *Magnolia x wieseneri*, I saw some green tails about 20–30cm long dangling from the wingnut. With a little imagination a catkin can look like the tail of an anorexic cat but I'm still pleased to see them on the tree.

During the nights when I cannot sleep, I don't count sheep but instead muse over the trees especially the *Drimys* and the wingnut. Why did they flower this year after doing nothing much for decades? Why did they both flower almost simultaneously? It was almost as if they had made a joint decision. Why did they flower in the year when the weeping ash was dying? I just wish I knew. ■



All photos courtesy of Paula McIntyre

Report of the 40th Annual General Meeting

by Áine-Máire Ní Mhurchú

The 40th Annual General meeting of the Society was held online on Saturday 7th May 2022. It was attended by Mary Forrest, Chair; David Grayson, Honorary Treasurer; Áine-Máire Ní Mhurchú, Honorary Secretary; Nichola Monk, Membership Secretary; Breda Cummins, Leinster sub-committee representative; Margaret McAuliffe, outgoing Munster sub-committee representative; Billy McCone, Northern sub-committee representative; Brid Kelleher and a further 34 members.

A warm welcome was given by Charles Nelson, who led the inaugural meeting in 1981 and became the first chairman. Charles congratulated the Society on achieving a membership of over 600 and the continuing rediscovery and collection of Irish cultivars.



The Chair, Mary Forrest, based her report on the 'privileges of membership' as set out in the constitution. In the past year eight lectures had been delivered via Zoom with approximately 120–130 members joining each lecture. Seven garden visits were arranged to gardens in Dublin, Co Down, Co Meath and Co Kildare. An online plant sale was organised in Belfast in May although the sale planned for Dublin in October 2021 succumbed to Covid restrictions. Three issues of the Newsletter had been published with some 32 contributors sharing their enthusiasm and expertise. A volume of *Moorea*, the Society's journal, was in preparation. The e-bulletin was issued seven times with reminders of events, booking for garden visits and news from members. The IGPS website, Facebook and Twitter continued to provide information for the membership and beyond.

A significant development was the award of National Collection Status by the UK-based organization, Plant Heritage, for the dispersed collection of 1065 Irish plants and plants with Irish associations listed as grown by members of the IGPS. This award generated much publicity for the Society in the horticultural press and in national newspapers on the island of Ireland.

Seed distribution had increased with twenty five members contributing seed and 125 members requesting seed of 182 different plants.

Membership stood at 634 individual members, an increase of 85 over the previous year. As of May 1st 2022 the numbers in each region were as follows:

Leinster 238

Northern 234

Munster 142

GB and others 20.

In conclusion Mary thanked the members of the Society, volunteers at the various events through the year, committee members, project co-ordinators and editors of print and social media, and her colleagues on the National Executive Committee.

Treasurer's Report

Accounts for the years 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 were presented by the Treasurer, David Grayson, and all three sets of accounts were formally adopted at the meeting.

The 2019-2020 accounts had been considered at the previous AGM but had not been adopted due to uncertainty about the cost of the Newsletter. It later transpired that this had been mistakenly amalgamated with the cost of printing and postage. The relevant costs were subsequently disentangled, and there was no change to the overall bottom line. Income amounted to €23,178, and expenditure was €21,608, leaving a net surplus of €1,570.

The 2020-2021 accounts showed income of €11,661 and expenditure of €16,990, leaving a net deficit of €5,329 for the year. There were

substantial reductions in income from plant sales and from garden visits, due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic; there was also a reduction in subscription income, largely because a significant number of pre-paid 5-year memberships had been taken out in earlier years.

The 2021-2022 accounts showed income of €17,260 and expenditure of €15,636, giving a net surplus of €1,624. Subscription income was up by €4,500 mainly due to an increase in the overall number of members. Income from plant sales and from garden visits was also higher than in 2020-2021. A satisfactory external Accountant's report, which was not available at the time of the 2022 AGM, had now been received.

A reserve fund of about €26,400 remained in the Society's savings account with Bank of Ireland, and the combined opening balances for 2022-2023 in the two current accounts at Sutton and at Newry amounted to about €19,300, leaving the Society in a healthy financial position.

Election of Honorary Members

Paddy Tobin (pictured) was nominated for and elected to honorary membership. Paddy, a former Chairperson and Editor of the Newsletter, has continued to promote the Society through his management of and now support for the website and Facebook. A keen galanthophile, Paddy has shared his knowledge with amateur and professionals alike through his photographs, articles and lectures. With Brendan Sayers, Paddy co-edited *Heritage Irish Plants*.



Election of Officers and Committee members

Vacancies existed for:

Vice Chairperson of the National Executive Committee,

Munster Chairperson

Munster Representative to National Executive Committee

Leinster Committee members.

No nominations were received for these vacancies.

National Executive Committee

Chair, Mary Forrest; Honorary Secretary, Áine-Máire Ní Mhurchú; Honorary Treasurer, David Greyson; Membership Secretary, Nichola Monk; Leinster sub-committee representative, Breda Cummins; Northern sub-committee representative, Billy McCone.

Membership of our regional sub-committees and other positions

Leinster Sub-Committee

Chair, Theresa Crothers; National Committee rep, Breda Cummins; Secretary, Mary Montaut; Eventbrite & garden visits, Anne-Marie Woods; Garden visits assistant, Edith Brosnan; Plant Sales, Michelle Nolan; Zoom & IT communications, Caroline O'Dowd.

Munster Sub-Committee:

Chair, Vacant; Committee members: Janet and Martin Edwardes, Ted Kiely, Margaret McAuliffe.

Northern, Sub-Committee

Chair, Robert Logan; Treasurer, Adrian Walsh; National Committee rep and Zoom, Billy McCone; Lecture organiser and Zoom, Joanna Loane; Plant sale organizer, Agnes Peacocke; Assistant plant sale organizer, Helen Murphy; Garden visit organizer, Robert Trotter; Promotions, Julie Holmes; Lismacloskey Garden lead volunteer, Maureen Reid.

Website and Facebook

Audrey O'Kane and Paddy Tobin.

e-Bulletin

Branka Gaberscik.

Editor of *Moorea*

Peter Milligan.

Editor of the Newsletter

Maeve Bell.

Heritage Plants Coordinator

Stephen Butler.

Seed Exchange Coordinator

Debbie Bailey.

Following the AGM, the recently appointed Curator of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dr Darach Lupton gave a talk on 'The National Botanic Gardens — Adapting to Change'. ■

Iris siberica 'Fran's Gold'

Jim Clarke, the Plant Manager at Johnstown Garden Centre before his retirement, spotted a single, bright yellow shoot on a clump of established *Iris siberica* in his own garden 20 years ago. This yellow shoot was separated and cultivated over many years to check its stability and to bulk up before being professionally trialed in 2018/19. A Plant Breeders Rights Patent was obtained in March 2020. The plant was shortlisted for the RHS Plant of the Year competition at the Chelsea Flower Show this year.

The foliage of this perennial iris, named for Jim's wife, Fran, emerges each spring a bright chartreuse yellow colour which continues until end of June when it turns a greener colour. In May, it is topped by beautiful blue and yellow flowers with intricate markings. It loves full sun and can grow in a wide variety of soil types ranging from ordinary garden conditions to the edge of pond as a marginal plant. Height 100cm, spread 30-40cm, frost hardy to below minus 20° C.



Can you help?

As mentioned by Mary Forrest in her note to members on page 4, the Society **urgently** needs volunteers to join its committees. There are currently vacancies on the National Committee for the posts of Vice Chair, Munster representative and for one other member while volunteers from Munster are needed to re-form the regional committee in order to organise lectures, garden visits and of course promote the conservation of Irish plants and plants with Irish associations in the area.

Being part of the one of the IGPS committees is a wonderful way of getting to know other keen gardeners. Some time and lots of enthusiasm are the main requirements. Why not get in touch with Mary, telephone +353 1298 5099, to have a chat about what's involved?

Conservation in action

At least two contributors to this issue have mentioned that one of the best ways to conserve our plant heritage is to grow and gift plants to others. Very many thanks to three generous members who have done exactly this. The stunning winter-flowering iris, *Iris unguicularis* 'Kilbroney Marble', has not been available commercially for years so a green-fingered couple propagated it from their own garden and earlier this year made 20 or more little pots available to each region for distribution.



Hepatica transsilvanica 'Elison Spence' used to be listed in The Plant Finder by nurseries in Britain (five in 2016 dropping to one in 2020) but, sadly, does not appear at all in the 2022 edition. Fortunately, a member whose original plant came from her aunt who lived next door to the Mrs Spence for whom it is named has potted up a dozen of these delightful woodlanders and they will be spread around this autumn.



Seed list

Last year was a bumper one for both the variety of different seeds on offer and the number of requests. Clearly the seed scheme is seen as a major benefit of membership but five times as many members request their free seeds than donate to the scheme.

Can you help to widen the network by contributing even a few seeds from your garden? It doesn't have to be from something rare or unusual.

1. Collect seed from healthy plants on a dry day cutting off the fully ripe heads as you find them.
2. Put the seed heads upside down in a paper bag or an envelope.
3. Write the name of the plant and the variety on the bag or envelope.
4. Once they are dry, remove the husks and other debris from the seeds
5. Put them into a clean envelope, label it and send to **Debbie Bailey, Clonguire, Ballynacarrig, Brittas Bay, Co Wicklow** to arrive with her no later than 1st December.

Remember that plants grown from named cultivars mostly do not 'come true'; vegetative propagation — cuttings or division — is the only way to get identical plants to the parent.



Will be Missed

Dermot O'Neill (1964–2022)

was a member of the foundation committee of the IGPS, the youngest member then and probably since of a Society committee.

His infectious enthusiasm for and knowledge of gardening and gardens was evident in his radio and television programmes. In the 1990's he hosted the *Garden Show* with Finola Reid and Helen Dillon while in 2008 he was the original presenter of the popular RTE Super Garden competition. Writing was another of his talents. He worked with Carmel Duignan on *Garden Heaven* magazine and his books included *Creative Gardening*, (1990)

Dermot Gardens, (2003), *Discover Gardening*, (2004), *Roses Revealed*, (2007).

In 2001 he bought a house and garden Clondeglass in Co Laois. Restoring this garden became a TV programme, Dermot's Secret Garden, and later a book *Clondeglass: Creating a Gardening Paradise*. The garden was a source of solace and sustenance as he coped with cancer. In 2016, Michael White of Mount Congreve named *Magnolia campbellii* 'Dermot O'Neill' in his honour.

Dermot unlocked the joy of gardening for many people and will be missed, not least by his friends in the IGPS. **MF**

Aims of the Irish Garden Plant Society

The aims of the Society are:

- the study of plants cultivated in Ireland and their history,
- the development of horticulture in Ireland,
- the education of members on the cultivation and conservation of garden plants,
- to research and located garden plants considered rare or in need of conservation especially those raised in Ireland by Irish gardeners and nurserymen,
- to co-operate with horticulturists, botanists, botanical and other garden, individuals and organisations in Ireland and elsewhere in these matters, and
- to issue and publish information on the garden plants of Ireland and to facilitate the exchange of information with interested individuals and groups.

Clematis henryi and *Clematis* ‘Henryi’: Easy to Confuse

by Charles Neslon

Some plants dubbed “henryi” (or “henrici”) do **not** commemorate Augustine Henry — not surprisingly, there were quite a few other botanical Henrys. This was pointed out many years ago by Sheila Pim, repeating a caveat by Dr Brian Morley, and is particularly the case with the “*Clematis henryi*” illustrated in the April 2022 Newsletter (p 24).

This spectacular Early Large-flowered clematis, with “French white” blossoms of “enormous size”, is not a species but an artificial hybrid (cultivar) created before 1872 in Scotland by Isaac Anderson-Henry (1800–1884) of Edinburgh. Thus, the name for Isaac-Henry’s clone should be a cultivar name within inverted commas — *Clematis* ‘Henryi’. Unfortunately the internet does not help: google “*Clematis*” and “henryi” and almost everything you see will be Anderson-Henry’s white-flowered ‘Henryi’.

I recall Sheila Pim being embarrassed that she had made this error, and insisting that it be corrected in the second edition of *The Wood and the Trees* (1984). Before that, she had contributed a short note to our journal *Moorea* (S. Pim, 1981.

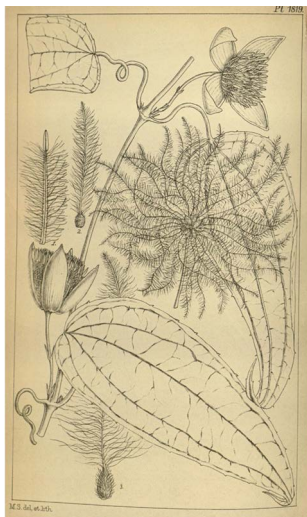
Clematis ‘Henryana’ – a correction to A. Henry’s biography. *Moorea* 1: 41) within which she suggested that the correct cultivar name was ‘Henryana’, but that is not so.

There is (or was) a species of *Clematis* from China named *Clematis henryi* by Daniel Oliver in 1889 after Augustine Henry, based on two of Henry’s collections from Yichang.

According to Plants of the World Online database (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew), that name has now been “sunk” into *Clematis hayatae*. Oliver’s *C. henryi* is winter-flowering, usually with undivided leaves, 3–5ins long, and small, only 1in. long, flowers with ivory-coloured “petals” flushed with pale red. Oliver noted that “Dr. Henry wrote in 1887 that the previous winter the flowers were noticed

peeping out of the snow”. It is widely distributed in forests and forest margins throughout southeastern Asia but it does not appear to be in commerce under either of these names. ■

Original illustration by Matilda Smith of *Clematis henryi* Oliv., drawn from herbarium specimens, from *Hooker’s Icones Plantarum* plate 1819.

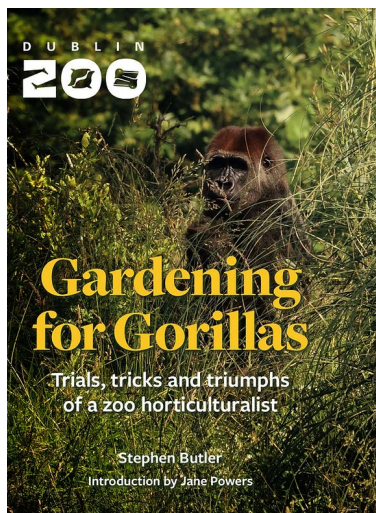


It is especially wonderful to have three very special books to recommend; each is Irish-published and each, one might think, could well have been written with an IGPS readership in mind.

As Stephen Butler has been central to IGPS activities for so many years, I don't think I can be faulted in giving his ***Gardening for Gorillas*** top listing. Stephen's long career as lead horticulturist at Dublin Zoo spanned those years which witnessed a fundamental transformative change in how the animal and human habitats of zoos were managed.

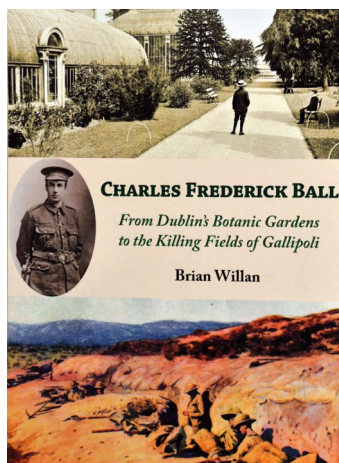
The challenges and fun of designing and selecting plants suited to and resistant to animals and humans give the material for an interesting and amusing read.

Gardening for Gorillas, Stephen Butler, Orla Kelly Publishing, €35. The book is available at Dublin Zoo or from the author's website, Gardening for Gorillas.



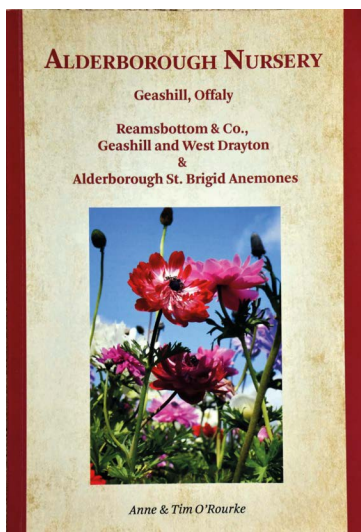
In 2016, the IGPS planted *Escallonia rubra* 'C.F. Ball' at The Irish National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge to remember one of the great horticulturists of the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin. The story of Charles Frederick Ball began with a box of letters, photographs and keepsakes that Alice Lane, C F Ball's widow, passed to her daughter and later passed to her grandson, Brian Willan. This prompted his research into the life of C F Ball and to his writing this wonderful book, a warm insight into the life of a man who had achieved greatly in his chosen career with obvious promise of greater achievements to come but whose life was tragically ended in the fighting at Gallipoli in the Great War.

Charles Frederick Ball: From Dublin's Botanic Gardens to the Killing Fields of Gallipoli, Brian Willan, The Liffey Press €19.99.



The story of **Alderborough Nursery** provides a story of extraordinary achievement and success for an Irish nursery which developed its own beautiful strain of the St Bridget Anemone. This book is a testimony to the esteem in which we hold beautiful plants, gardening and horticulture here in Ireland. More especially, it recalls the central part one family nursery played in the life of an Irish community so that it became part of its social history, a part now fondly and proudly recalled in this volume. Alongside the horticultural aspect of the volume, there is a tremendous insight into social life at that time, illuminated with copious original material.

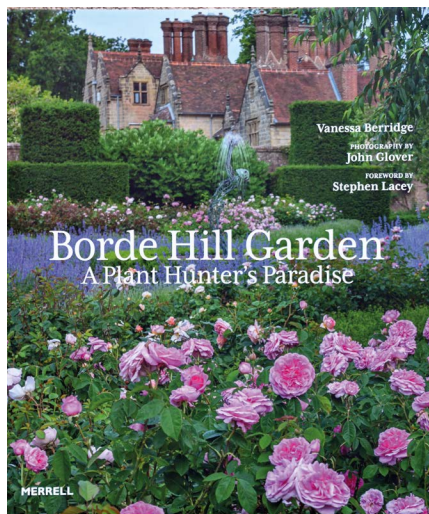
Alderborough Nursery, Geashill Offaly: Reamsbottom & Co. Geashill and West Drayton & Alderborough St Brigid Anemones, Anne & Tim O'Rourke, €20. Available from <http://www.offalyhistory.com> and Birr Castle shop.



Away from the immediate Irish interest, **Borde Hill** by Vanessa Berridge is the story of, by any standards, an exceptional garden. Colonel Stephenson Robert Clarke created the gardens at Borde Hill, West Sussex, from the 1890s onwards; his plant-collecting enthusiasm was inherited by the following three generations of the family giving us today one of the great gardens of England.

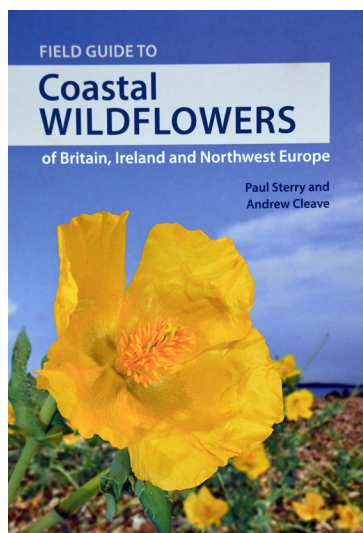
Over time Borde Hill has been transformed from a home to a collection of plants to an extraordinary garden with wonderful design and modern planting ensuring the best of gardens, one full of exceptionally good plants organised and displayed in a perfectly pleasing setting, and the book does it justice!

Borde Hill Garden: A Plant Hunter's Paradise, Vanessa Berridge, photography by John Glover, Merrell, £40.



These last few years have seen a great interest in our wildflowers, both growing them in the garden and spotting them in the wild, and a good guide is worth its weight in pollen. **Coastal Wildflowers** delivers far more than its title promises and it might have been more accurate to say the book describes plants of coastal counties for the range presented certainly extends far beyond the shoreline and one is left wondering what was excluded in what strikes me as a very comprehensive selection of our native flora.

Field Guide to Coastal Wildflowers of Britain, Ireland and Northwest Europe, Paul Sterry and Andrew Cleave, Princeton University Press, £20,



Crevice gardening is the very latest, cutting-edge approach to rock gardening, that long-practiced effort to reproduce an environment in the garden which imitates those mountainous environs where the precious plants alpine garden

enthusiasts love so much grow majestically and beautifully. If it is your wish to replicate these conditions in our garden, I recommend you read **The Crevice Garden**.

The Crevice Garden, Kenton Seth and Paul Spriggs, Filbert Press, £25

I have three how-to books to hand, aimed at the beginner with plenty of interest for the more experienced also: **What to Sow, Grow and Do, A Seasonal Garden Guide**, from experienced gardener Benjamin Pope is a straight forward, well organised, clearly explained and a fail-safe guide to bring the beginner and enthusiastic gardener through the gardening year.

Celestina Robertson's **Cut Flowers: Prepare the ground, sow seed, nurture, harvest, fill your vases** will open your eyes to the joys and opportunities for beautiful cut flowers from your own garden and will guide you along the way as you grow, cut, display and enjoy.

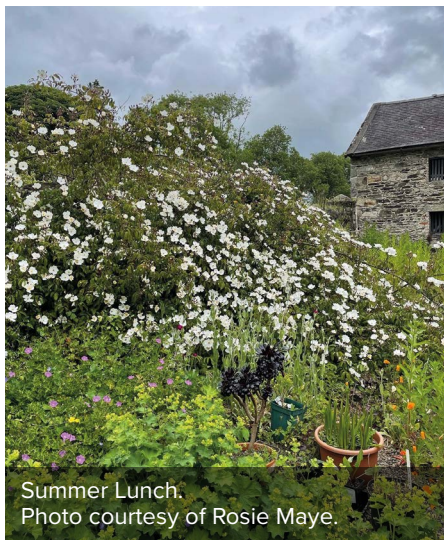
Susanna Grant's **Shade: Work with the light, grow the right plants, bring dark corners to life** shows that even the most dismal and unpromising corners of our gardens can become interesting and beautiful when the correct plant is used.

These last titles are from Bloom, an imprint of Frances Lincoln, and if you would like to read lengthier comment on these or any of the above do drop in to the Blog on the society's website where all are posted or visit my own scribble spot: <https://anirishgardener.wordpress.com/>

Around the Regions

Summer lunch and garden visit

The Leinster committee organised a very enjoyable outing to County Wexford on Saturday 11th June with a morning visit to Coolaught Gardens and Garden Centre in Enniscorthy followed by a visit to and the Summer Lunch at Hill View House, New Ross.



Summer Lunch.
Photo courtesy of Rosie Maye.

Westport Weekend 24-26th June organised by the Leinster committee

Kylemore Abbey. Our visit to Kylemore Abbey walled garden turned out to be one of the wettest days of the year, yet what an experience. The head gardener, Anje Gohle, gave us a wonderfully informative tour. The gardens are of the Victorian era and were restored with pre-1901 plant varieties using old photographs from The Lawrence Collection and the very detailed Bill of Sale of the Abbey, as all notes from previous head gardeners were missing.

The herbaceous borders, probably the longest in Ireland, are a sight to behold while the grass is punctuated by richly planted flower beds in dramatic shapes including a snake, a shamrock, diamonds, swirls, and circles.

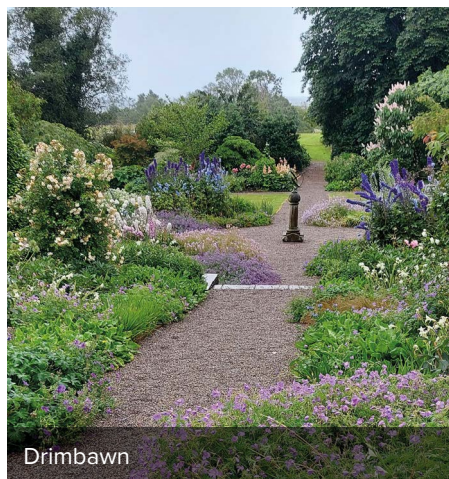
The red brick walls help retain the heat, with a recorded difference of 4° higher within the walls than out. Although the many greenhouses were heated by burning lime in the kiln underneath, the smoke was piped along a 'seam' on the back walls out onto the mountain side. Also to be seen are the old Tool Shed complete with tools, the 'Bothy' where the young under-gardeners slept, and the beautifully restored Head Gardener's cottage.

Mary Dunne

Drimbawn. Approaching Drimbawn up the main drive, our eyes feasted on immaculate grass verges with island beds of ferns and hostas that never hosted a snail! Fiona, one of the eight gardeners, led us through the damp garden with ferns and masses of candelabra primulas to a walled garden. Six acres of magical planting on terraces lead down to a central feature surrounded by a fabulous colour mix of delphiniums while scented shrub roses separated one terrace from another. There were cannas, bananas, hedychium in variety, *Beschorneria yuccoides* with its huge coral spikes, clematis and fig trees, all exotic and growing splendidly in such a sheltered environment.

The view from the terraces was always of Lough Mask although it was a little obscured by the rain. Despite that, it was as near to perfection as I have ever seen.

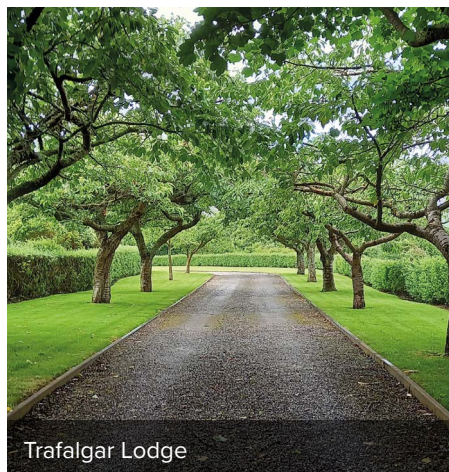
Margaret Power



Drimbawn

Trafalgar Lodge. A canopy of sturdy cherry trees lined the road that led us to Trafalgar Lodge. The white house was surrounded by a generous green lawn giving stunning views of Clew Bay and Croagh Patrick. Michael gave us a running commentary on the ups and downs of making this very special place. Some plants didn't thrive exposed as they were to Atlantic winds and rain and only the hardiest survived. The lily pond, a secret place we discovered over the brow of a hill, was the icing on the cake.

Anne Murphy, Aideen Laurent and Margaret Hynes



Trafalgar Lodge

Hammerbeam. June Bourke welcomed us to her beautiful garden, Hammerbeam, created and nurtured in and around the family farmhouse and buildings set on a slope and planted with vibrant healthy plants. The garden works beautifully with the buildings, terraces, paths, river and views. The planting was beautiful, with vibrant colours, very healthy lilies, roses and many perennials. There are sculptures and a museum created with metal pots and tools. Our flower arranging class, based in one of the beautiful, stone farm buildings was enjoyed by all. Truly a space of nurturing, beauty, creativity and fun.

Roslyn Flackett



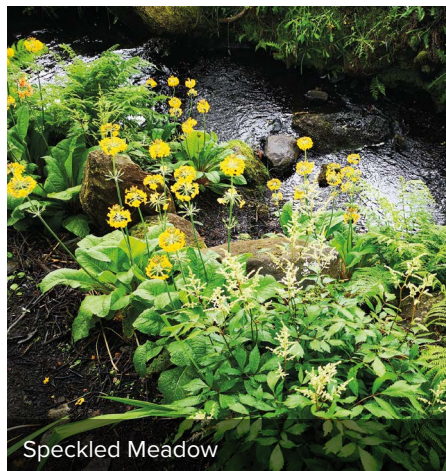
Hammerbeam

Speckled Meadow. The final garden, Speckled Meadow, was started in 2002 by the owner Marty McGluin, who also built the stone house which fits beautifully into the landscape. It is partly a woodland garden and partly planted in the cottage garden style closer to the house, with plenty of exotics such as salvias, dahlias, watsonias and canna lilies sprinkled throughout.

Marty told us that when he bought the property he couldn't see the stream that runs through the woodland part of the garden but he could hear it. He has since cleared a path that runs along

the stream and planted the banks with primulas, foxgloves, hostas, astilbes, ferns and many more (he is a self confessed plantaholic). The sun was shining, the chat was flowing and the garden made for a very relaxing setting to end the tour.

Kirsten Walker



Speckled Meadow

Grey Abbey Garden 2nd July and Barmeach Castle, 23rd July organized by the Northern committee

Grey Abbey House & Garden. Dodging the showers, we were guided by Daphne Montgomery, with well-timed interjections of Latin names, and by experienced gardener, Jerome Convey, advising on useful techniques. Daphne has gardened here in County Down for over 50 years with the garden constantly evolving and developing and she's full of praise for all those who have aided and guided her along the way.

The Montgomery's newest experiment is the Southern Hemisphere garden. Sheltered and moist, beds are filled with woody treasures and unusual combinations enjoying the mild conditions close to Strangford Lough: *Mitraria coccinea* 'Lake Puye' romping through *Embothrium* and echoing its flowers, the bright, acid-yellow flowers

of *Wachendorfia* with gorgeous pleated leaves, and the dramatic foliage of *Blechnum novae-zelandiae* and low growing *Baccharis patagonica* all caught the eye. A glorious mature Caucasian wing nut added drama as we passed under an arching branch dripping with chains of greenish seedpods.

Moving up to the walled garden, we entered another world: a picturesque vegetable plot, well-filled borders full of interest and colour, and an orchard featuring Victorian and Irish cultivars on either side of a mature lime walk. But the roses stole the show. Blowsy with colour and scent, there were species roses and old-fashioned ramblers clothing the walls, bright climbers on trellises punctuating the border with shades of pink, all looking healthy and lush. Spoiled with tea and cakes in the hedge garden, we were fuelled up for our visit to the outstanding house.

Claire McNally



Daphne Montgomery with *Rosa* 'Félicité-Perpétue' on the wall.

Barmeath Castle and Garden. Turreted and gabled in true Baronial fashion, Barmeath commands lush County Louth pasture with views to sea and mountain. From a garden history perspective, this lovely demesne is a significant place.

In the 1750's, Thomas Wright of Durham brought the picturesque to the park and Horace Walpole and Mrs Delaney would have delighted at his rustic bridge spanning the lake. A laurel lawn and yew-lined archery ground bring areas of green repose acting as a prelude to the walled garden. Destitute eighteen years ago, driven by the energy and enthusiasm of our hostess this four acre space has been transformed to horticultural splendour.

Individual features flow seamlessly into adjoining areas whilst still maintaining the overall cohesiveness. There are lots of very good plants, thoughtful colour schemes, expansive borders and eye catchers of sculpture, urns and a charming summer house. It is productive as well — a greenhouse, fruit cage, vegetables and cutting garden.

We also enjoyed a tour of the Castle where the portrait collection brought us face to face with many of the significant players in Irish history; this coupled with the many anecdotes related by our host ensured a memorable visit.

Robert Logan



Members at the summer house. Photo courtesy of Simon Scott



Dates for your Diary

Border at Kilmacurragh. Photo courtesy of Seamus O'Brien.

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 16th October
11am to 1pm

Plant Sale

**Newtownpark Parish Pastoral Centre,
Newtownpark Avenue
Blackrock, County Dublin A94 VF74.**

Organised by the Leinster committee, this is an unrivalled opportunity to buy a huge range of plants including many rare or uncommon plants and Irish Heritage Plants. It is also a major fund raising opportunity for the Society.

Tuesday 25th October
at 7.30pm

Cahir Bridge Revisited with Carl Wright

Venue: The Old Courthouse, Market Square, Antrim BT41 4AW

Cahir Bridge Garden in the Burren was begun in 1999. It started as a little project to tidy up the front of the house with little gardening knowledge and no interest in garden design. It gradually became an 'obsession' which has now extended to nearly two acres and has become home to a vast collection of plants. This talk covers the progress and changes over the past 23 years bringing us up to date with the most recent developments and the expansion of the many notable plant collections.

Carl Wright started coming to County Clare through his interest in caving and pot holing but then stayed and created what is now an award-winning garden. A recent development is his major collection of Irish-bred daffodils



Carl Wright

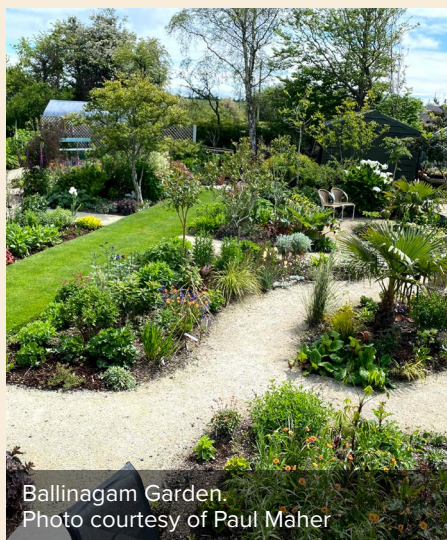
Saturday 12th November
at 2.00pm

The Delight of Gardening: past, present and future with Paul Maher and Edel McDonald

Venue: National Botanic Gardens,
Glasnevin, Dublin DO9 VY63

Lifelong gardeners, Paul and Edel recently moved from Dublin to Ballinagam in County Wexford and started to re-make the garden attached to the house formerly owned by Edel's parents. Issues 153 and 155 of this Newsletter carried articles by Paul about the process and the fabulous results.

Long-standing members of the IGPS, both recently retired from the National Botanic Gardens where Paul was formerly the Curator and Edel the Foreman of the Nursery Section.



Ballinagam Garden.
Photo courtesy of Paul Maher

**Tuesday 6th December
at 7.30pm**

Creating Magic in my Garden with June Blake

Venue: Malone House, Barnett's Park,
Upper Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5PB

June's presentation will show how creating that magic moment is what gardening is all about. Sometimes a fleeting moment in spring when all the tulips are at their very best with perfect light creates that magic! Later it could be alliums, irises and other early summer plants. For her though, the real magic happens in late summer and early autumn when all the planning finally comes together with hundreds of various coloured dahlias which have been carefully selected according to colour actually works. It's usually just a moment in time but it is magic!

June Blake began developing her garden at Tinode, County Wicklow about 20 years ago from an almost blank canvas. Extending to three acres, it has strong design, great character and is famous for its exquisite planting and use of colour. Jane Powers in her seminal book *The Irish Garden* wrote: "June Blake has created something like a piece of poetry..."



June Blake

**Tuesday 17th January 2023 at
7.30pm (provisional)**

The Eden Project with Catherine Cutler

Venue: A Zoom online lecture

Catherine Cutler has worked at the Eden Project for more than 20 years and is currently Biomes Manager; she will talk about the Eden Project and climate change.

Confirmation and further details to follow by email.

[These are the events which have been notified at the time of going to press.]

Meet the Committee

Stephen Butler

Heritage Plant Coordinator



I trained with the Royal Parks in London, a three year apprenticeship in Hampton Court followed by two years as a gardener, and then undertook the three year course at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Working as a horticulturist in Bangladesh brought me into the arms of a redhead... and to Dublin!

Dublin Zoo in 1981 was a bleak and barren place for plants and a real challenge to effect change — no budget for plants and only a small garden team. Slowly improvements were made gathering momentum in 2000 when a new master plan brought in 'immersive' habitats for the animals with more room for plants too. I retired after 37 years there.

Always keen to be involved, I helped bring the Professional Gardeners Guild to Ireland where there are now 50 members. IGPS roles over the years have included stints as Hon Sec, seed distribution organiser, Plant Heritage representative (including for a while chairing the Ireland, Scotland, and Northern England Region), and Chair of the Leinster committee. I am now Heritage Plants Coordinator.

Billy McCone

Northern Representative



Since retiring in 2005 and embarking on a second career as a garden designer, I quickly found huge gaps in my horticultural knowledge. So, when asked to volunteer at the Northern region's autumn plant sale at Rowallane Gardens, I saw an opportunity to increase my plant knowledge.

Having enjoyed the first plant sale and learnt a lot in the process, I volunteered for a second. I must have been doing something right as the then Northern Chair, Yvonne Penpraze, invited me to join the Northern sub-committee which I readily accepted.

Since then, I have served as Northern regional treasurer followed by Honorary Secretary and then Chair of the National Executive Committee. I also stood in temporarily as Membership Secretary and Newsletter editor. I now serve as the Northern region's representative on the National Committee and help manage Eventbrite and Zoom. When I can, I work one morning a week with our team of volunteers at the Pogue's Entry garden in Antrim.

Thanks to our Contributors

Stephen Butler was formerly Curator of Horticulture at Dublin Zoo and has written a book about his experiences there. He takes the lead in all matters to do with Irish Heritage Plants.

Mary Davies, an Honorary Member and former chairman of the Society, co-founded *The Irish Garden* magazine and continued to write for it until very recently.

Nicola & Peter Milligan garden at the Mount Stewart estate on the shores of Strangford Lough in Co Down. Both are past members of the Northern Committee.

Áine-Márie Ní Mhurchú was elected honorary secretary of the Society in 2021. She lives and gardens in County Meath.

Rae McIntyre is a retired teacher, a keen gardener and long time contributor to the Newsletter.

Charles Nelson VMM FLS is one of the Society's Honorary members. He was chairman from 1981 to 1984 and again from 1992 to 1994 and editor of *Moorea* vols 1-10 (1981–1993).

Maurice Parkinson, along with his wife Joy, created Ballyrobert Cottage Garden and set up the nursery of the same name. He was formerly Head of Parks for Belfast City Council.

Brendan Sayers is Glasshouse Foreman at the National Botanic Gardens and has spent almost 30 years working there; he specialises in orchids, both native and tropical. He is a long standing member and former committee member.

Paddy Tobin, a former chairman of the Society and editor of the Newsletter, lives in Waterford and writes a column for *The Irish Garden* magazine. He was elected an Honorary Member at the 2022 AGM.

Cherry Townsend runs Kilcoan Gardens on Islandmagee in County Antrim. She is a regular contributor to the BBC NI Radio programme *Gardener's Corner*.

Many thanks to **Mary Dunne, Roslyn Flackett, Margaret Hynes, Aideen Laurent, Anne Murphy, Claire McNally, Robert Logan, Margaret Power, and Kirsten Walker** for their contributions.

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While every effort is made to ensure that content is correct at the time of printing, views expressed in the articles are those of the author(s) and may not reflect those of the Society.

Any factual errors will be corrected as soon as possible.



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